



# IMAGES

Vol. 11, No. 4  
Winter 1998

NEWS OF INTEREST TO THE ALUMNI OF REDEEMER COLLEGE

## Alumni abroad!

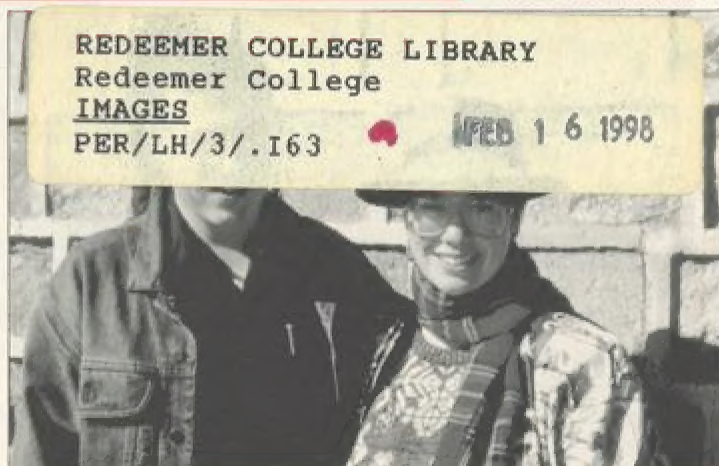
*As part of its on-going series of articles looking at alumni at work, Images asked a number of alumni who are currently working overseas to reflect on their experiences. From Asia to Africa, Redeemer alumni have been involved in a variety of jobs outside of North America and they have some interesting reflections on how they were prepared for life overseas. They also commented on the impact that they are having in these areas--and the impact that these places have had on them.*

What follows are selections of the letters that a number of alumni have submitted. If you would like to read the whole piece, you can find them on the alumni listserv. To join this forum dedicated to former students, send a message to [majordomo@redeemer.on.ca](mailto:majordomo@redeemer.on.ca) and leave the subject line blank. In the body, type **subscribe alumni**. You will receive further information shortly about how to participate. You can also request the full letters by contacting the Alumni Office at the address below.

### Homecoming 98

Plans are underway for Homecoming 98, the annual celebration of Redeemer alumni. This year's activities will be held on **Saturday, September 19**. Although the Alumni Board is still working on ideas for the day (and is always open to suggestions), we will again be having a golf tournament, something that many of you have asked for.

All alumni are invited to spend the day on campus, meeting old friends and seeing just how much the college, and the Alumni Association, have grown. The April issue of *Images* will have full details and registration materials. In the meantime, if you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to make, please direct them to the Alumni Office at Redeemer.



Bryan and Judy Alkema in Korea.

### Waving banners in the hermit kingdom

By JUDY ALKEMA (91)

All my skills, patience and abilities have been tested and honed in Korea. True, there is the inevitable "culture shock" to deal with: a matter of becoming accustomed to the unfamiliar in most cases. The different eating drinking, socializing and working habits alone would require an anthropologist's tone to sum up.

In Korea, a still-strongly Confucian so-

ciety, the paramount importance of family values and the submission of the individual's desires to the whole has produced a character which has many admirable traits. The education system fails, however, to encourage creativity, to foster divergent thinking, and to nurture self-esteem. Though these concepts may already smack of clichés to your ears, here in Korea I have found myself a lonely holistic symbol, a pioneer waving a newly-sewn banner of Christian education.

I suspect I would be asking this crucial question anywhere in the world: How can I best make that essential merger between learned theory and experienced practice? How do the ideas we absorbed in the bright academic groves find their most effective expression in the crude and unpredictable reality of 12 ten-year old Koreans in

one small grey room?

What you learn in the classrooms, the halls, the studies and courtyards of Redeemer is an intangible but powerful force, a *heilgeist* that stands out against the *zeitgeist* that will carry you through. If life is a highway, your passenger seat will not be empty. And that diploma that you are wondering what to with--don't try to keep it pristine. Use it as road map, with your short-cuts, wrong turns and toll-free turnpikes scribbled all over it. I couldn't do without mine.

Judy (VanArragon, 91) Alkema and her husband Bryan (91) are teaching English as a Second Language in Seoul, South Korea.

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### IMAGES

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## Alumni abroad

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### The more things change...

By MEREDITH DYKSTRA (94)

**P**oinsettia trees? Dodging cars as I walk to school; disinfecting vegetables before eating; wearing skirts whenever in public--did Redeemer prepare me for this?

A different life, a different world! On the surface, my life appears radically different than my days at Redeemer College; yet strong common threads weave their way through the fabric of my life--even here in Nigeria.

Redeemer provided me with the tools needed to become a teacher. Yes, teaching here is different from the setting of the education program. My tin classroom roof proves to be a great challenge during the rainy season when the thundering torrents of rain make my voice inaudible. The make-up of my class is unique; the students in Grade 3 represent 10 different nationalities--a wonderful opportunity for us all to learn about different cultures but also frustrating as we struggle to find common ground. However, the lessons from my background of Christian education, includ-

ing Redeemer College, have helped me to grasp at the unchanging truth not bound by continental borders: Jesus Christ is the Lord over all of life! Indeed, when so much appears to differ, I am thankful for the guidance I found in Redeemer's academic program that molded my thinking and with that my teaching.

Although I am grateful for the academic programs, my fondest Redeemer memories are of the fellowship and friendship of the Christian community. And now I live in another Christian community: a mission compound. Once again the Lord has provided me with a "substitute family" upon moving away from home, even if this time the moving was a little more drastic! Within dorm life I lived with people from different denominations and we often discussed our differences. I now live and work among missionaries in a school that hosts 27 nationalities and has 11 co-operating bodies representing some very different denominations. Once again, the "living" lessons learned during my four years at Redeemer have helped me in life today.

Teaching children about the Lord Jesus; living in relationships that glorify God; enjoying friend-

ships with fellow Christians...maybe life isn't as different as it first appears!

*Meredith Dykstra (94) has been teaching Grade 3 at Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria, since July, 1997.*

*Continued on page 3...*



*Poinsettia trees? Everything is new and different for Meredith Dykstra.*

## Redeemer College alumni by the numbers

**L**ike other things "Redeemer," the Alumni Association has started small but, with the Lord's blessings, is continuing to grow.

Since the first commencement in 1986, 756 students have graduated from Redeemer. There are also over 470 students who have completed at least eight courses at Redeemer, qualifying them as alumni as well.

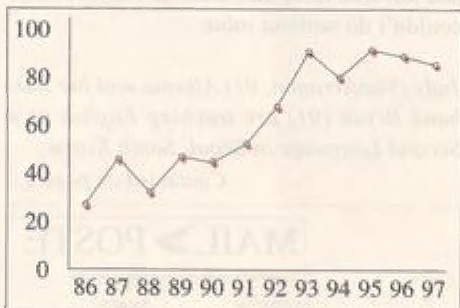


Fig. 1: Size of graduating class by year

*Images* is mailed to 940 of the 1,227 alumni. There are 170 alumni for whom the college does not have an accurate address, and the remainder have married other alumni.

As the Alumni Association has grown, so has alumni giving to the college. The Lord has blessed many alumni, from the earliest graduates to those who have just recently moved on, with the means and desire to support Redeemer financially.

During the budget year 1996-97, Redeemer alumni donated almost \$28,000 to the college and the Redeemer Foundation. The graph below shows the percentage of alumni in each class who have made a gift to the college, and the total giving by class.

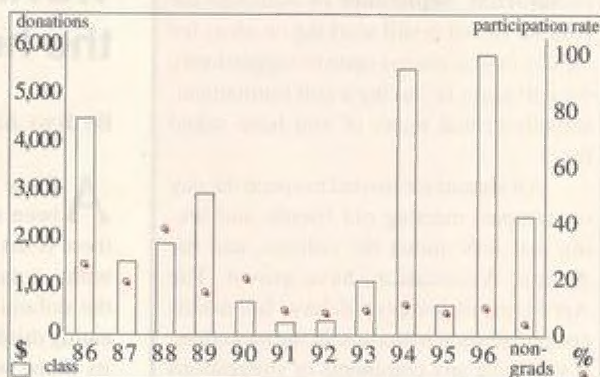


Fig. 2: Donations and participation rate of alumni by year.

The Alumni Board of Directors and the college thank alumni for their continued support of Redeemer. We are always open to feedback as well. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Alumni Office.



## Alumni abroad

...continued from page 2

### Here we go again...

By MICHAEL BRINKMAN (95)

Some of you may remember a slightly in sane travelogue in the pages of *The CROWN*. Well, it would seem the Lord has built some people to travel, because I'm at it again. I am working for the Michael Brinkman Make-it-up-as-you-go-along Program, and the second in command (me) is kind of 'different.' But, the First In Command will not steer me wrong, if I only listen to Him.

This has been my experience thus far during the two and a half years since I graduated. Since then, I have spent about 17 months in Japan, gone through teacher's college (ugh) and also been privileged to visit and make friends in Korea, Hong Kong, and FSU.

I had a chance to grow spiritually within a diverse Christian community, and that was the most relevant of my experiences at Redeemer. Knowing Who is in control and Who I can rely on is the major factor in life. There are many things to adjust to in a foreign culture, and by clinging to the essentials of a relationship with God, I can jettison western values and customs when I don't need them. Also knowing that both cultures are far from God's perfection helps me

keep things in perspective.

I don't know what the future will hold. Sometimes I think that God has a purpose for me in Japan, and that I will stay here quite a while. I would like that. I see so much brokenness, and I know Who would do this nation, and Canada too, much good. In my day to day life, I hope that I can point people to Jesus in whatever country I live in.

*Mike Brinkman (95) has spent a good amount of his post-Redeemer days travelling.*

### The best laid plans...

By GREG SENNEMA (93)

How did I end up here? A Swahili-speaking, shovel-wielding librarian driving a four-wheel drive along muddy tracks to work with rural, mountain-dwelling Tanzanians.

This was not the way it was supposed to be. I did not plan this.

When I consider my present situation, I find much amusement in recalling how I once thought I saw my future. For example, when I began my studies at Redeemer College in 1989, I pretty much had it all figured out: four years studying history and English, and then I would find some sort of job "in history and/or English."

During my third year at Redeemer, it slowly dawned on me that as far as my studies were going, I was much better at organizing my books than I was at thoroughly reading them. Dan Savage (then chief librarian), happy and perhaps mildly surprised that someone thought library work interesting, allowed me to perform tasks beyond the

stacking and shelving of books. One thing led to another and a short time later I was enrolled in the Faculty of Library and Information Studies at the University of Toronto.

And after completing my Masters, I started a contract position and began to question my career choice. As it turned out, my wife Christy was having similar thoughts and so together we sought to find employment somewhere "overseas" which would utilize the skills that both of us had spent years to attain. This requires the use of our people and communication skills, our time management and organizational skills, and our not-so-much-used talents such as driving a fully loaded vehicle over a three-log bridge. And as I drive over such a bridge, I think to myself, how did I end up here? This wasn't the way it was supposed to be. I did not plan this.

And that is exactly the point; I did not plan this. It is one thing to simply say that God is in control. It is another to look, see, and believe that this is true. What sometimes looks to me as a mish-mash of fragmented past experiences, at other times looks like the most brilliant, beautiful, and ingenious plan of all. Regardless of whether you have had a simpler or a more convoluted mix of experiences than I have, you will always be able to account for your present situation by understanding the extent of God's control over your past. And present. And future.

*Greg (93) and Christy Sennema work for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee in Tanzania.*



*Michael Brinkman surrounded by students in Japan.*

## Any techno-alumni out there?

We live in an ever-increasing technological age. Even Redeemer College is responding to the new times, (reluctantly) retiring the venerable old VAX for new PCs and a more "wired" campus.

The next issue of *Images* wants to hear how alumni have adapted to the technological workplace: How does a classic liberal arts education find relevance in a constantly

changing modern workplace? Where does the transforming Christian Worldview find expression amongst all those bits and bytes?

We invite you to comment on these or any other topics related to the increase of technology. Please send your submission to the Alumni Affairs Office by March 20, 1998.

Come and see...

## STRANGER IN THE LAND

Raymond Louer's play returns to the Redeemer College auditorium stage after first being performed in Nov. 95. This time the ensemble includes Redeemer alumni who will be travelling with the troupe as it embarks on an unprecedented 16-show tour through Southern Ontario. For more information, see page 4 of the attached issue of *Reflections*.



## PERSONAL TOUCH

► **Stephanie (92)** and **Greg VanRooyen** give thanks to God for the safe arrival of Katelyn Caroline, born October 28, 97. Janelle (22 months) is very excited to welcome her new baby sister. Greg continues to work as a paramedic in Orillia and Barrie, and Stephanie is on maternity leave from her position as Program Manager with Christian Horizons in Barrie. They live at 39 Ferguson Drive, Barrie, ON, L4N 7B5. Tel: (705) 725-0284.

► **Drs. Michael Koke (90)** and **Sandra Brickell** were married in August 1996. Both are presently completing residency in Ottawa in Geriatrics and in Internal Medicine, respectively. The couple hopes to settle in Northern Ontario (Kenora area) upon completion of training.

► **Kevin Pasma (x90)** graduated from the University of Waterloo with a Bachelor of Mathematics in 1995 and in Nov. 1997, qualified as a Chartered Accountant. Currently he is employed with the firm of Soberman, Isenbaum & Colomby in Toronto. He lives at 212 Millwood Rd., Toronto, ON, M4S 1J7. Tel: (416) 932-2143.

► **Hans (96)** and **Grace (Haveman, 95) VanDoodewaard** were married on Oct. 11, 1997 in Vineland, ON. Hans continues to enjoy working at Premier Impressions, a printing company in Grimsby and Grace is well into her third year of teaching. She teaches a Grade 5/6 class at Heritage Christian School in Jordan. They live at 3801 Cherry Ave., Vineland, ON, L0R 2C0. Tel: (905) 562-0843.

► **Mike (88)** and **Liese (Van Arragon, 95) Van Lingen** would like to announce the arrival of their first child, Thomas James, on Dec. 23, 1997. Both parents and baby are doing well. Mike is currently working for Versus Technologies in Toronto, while Liese and Thomas are home together during the day. You can contact us via e-mail at [mike@tradeit.com](mailto:mike@tradeit.com).

## F E E D B A C K

The Redeemer College Alumni Association invites you to respond to any of the articles that you see in Images.

Letters to the Editor or article length pieces should be directed to the editor at the address on the front page.

The Alumni Board also appreciates any suggestions or feedback on any alumni related activity.

# Membership increases

The fall 1997 annual Alumni Membership Drive results are in, and once again Redeemer alumni have shown their increasing support of the college. Between July and December, 67 alumni either became new members or renewed their membership in Redeemer College. The Alumni Board of Directors and the college thank those alumni members for responding so generously to this initiative.

Redeemer College is a member based organization--the grass roots support comes from the hundreds of people who agree with

the college's Statement of Basis and Principles and agree to pay a membership fee.

The Alumni Board encourages all alumni to become members of Redeemer College. The Alumni Rate for Membership is only \$60 per year, only half of what other supporters are required to pay, but alumni retain all the benefits of membership, including the right to vote during the college's Annual Meeting.

More importantly, the college counts on its members to provide the guidance and input that it needs to faithfully follow its mission.

## Rise up, you Dry Bones

Over the years, Redeemer has developed a reputation for producing high quality theatre. But what is a theatre

junkie to do once the final curtain has fallen on his or her Redeemer years? Well, for a number of veteran Redeemer alumni, it means starting your own theatre company.

"Dry Bones Theatre" is a group of six former students, some of whom have been working professionally since graduation, who plan on further developing the skills and talents in theatre that were first shaped at Redeemer.

Dry Bones will be rehearsing at the college starting this May, and their first produc-

tion will be this September as part of Homecoming 98. Watch further issues of *Images* for more details as plans become finalized. Right now, the group is seeking other alumni to help in the production. Positions include:

- House Manager
- Running Crew (Lighting Board Operator, Sound Board Operator)
- Set construction crew
- Assistant Stage Manager
- Properties Assistant

If you are interested in getting involved in this project, contact Rebecca Neutel Bootsma, Production Stage Manager, at 416-512-2480.

**Catch the debut at Homecoming 98**

## NEWS OF INTEREST

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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